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## READER-SUBMITTED

Posted on: Sunday, April 6, 2008

# Project Hawaii 2008 A Teen Mentoring Summer Camp for Homeless Keiki

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Magin Patrick  
Reader Submitted

Project Hawaii and Christmas Wish Program have teamed up once again to offer the homeless children living in poverty on the Big Island of Hawaii a once in a life time opportunity to experience summer camp and make a lasting bond with their teen mentor. This very unique one of a kind camp was designed to allow teens the opportunity to make a difference and work hands on for better change. Teens also will receive a certificate of volunteer service for 120 hours in mentoring, program design, as well as leadership and team work. This camp is open to teens ages 15-18 (Sophomore-Seniors)



Camp life will include being paired with a camp buddy or two, and then sharing their experience and working hands on through the daily planned activities. Some activities include arts, nature trail exploration, swimming, team sports, educational projects, science experiences, flash light tag, and more. Each teen mentor will be immersed with their camp buddy and spend the entire week helping them to develop better life-skills and eating habits, as well as helping them gain the self-esteem needed to succeed in this trying world.

Your camp buddies come from various poverty stricken backgrounds. Some live in tents, or cars, and some are just getting back on their feet moving into an apartment or shelter situation. Camp buddies are both male and female between the ages of 7-10. The program is specifically designed to benefit this age group, and it proves to be a once in a life time changing opportunity for the keiki who are able to attend. Many of these keiki have large families, and they don't have much one-on-one attention from anyone. This is a special time when they get to spend time away from their siblings and daily family crisis and grow in a nurturing environment designed with their needs in mind. During this short time, teens will watch their buddies

blossom and become more self reliant and confident in their choices. The program is designed to work as a unit that will instill life long changes.

Our summer camp is located on the Hamakua Coast high in the mountains and secluded from surrounding areas. Campers will have the choice of sleeping in cabins on beds, or under the Hawaiian stars in tents. Our program is a USDA regulated program, so all meals and snacks will fit those standards, and be prepared on site. Teen mentors will be able to assist with food prep and help their buddies to enjoy a wonderful and healthy summer. (Most camp buddies will gain weight and become more healthy as they start eating more nutritious meals). Camp life is from July 12th-20th. All teen mentors must arrive to the Hilo International Airport on the 12th of July. (Teens will be picked up by camp staff and transferred to hotel for orientation and teen activities)

Teens will be required to bring personal need items, a sleeping bag/blanket and pillow, as well as enough clothing for the entire camp, as well as a sweater and long pants for colder weather. (we do not have laundry service), extra money for personal snacks or other needs. Everything else will be provided. All meals, accommodations, transportation on Big Island, and camp activities. Please remember this is summer camp, not a fashion show, so your special outfits are not needed, and you can plan on getting dirty. Please visit the website link for more details and information about this camp <http://www.culturalinstituteofamerica.com/miniproject.html>

After the summer camp, teens will present their camp buddies with a certificate of graduation, and enjoy a BBQ lunch with the buddies families. This allows the teens to meet the whole ohana, and the buddies to show off their new mentors. Camp buddies and their siblings will also receive a backpack filled with school supplies, a new outfit and shoes to start their new school year off on the right foot and ready to learn.

Spend your summer making a difference and make new life-long friendships.

About Christmas Wish Program, Inc.: CWP is a nonprofit organization that is run 100% by volunteers to enhance the lives of homeless keiki. CWP is also fully publicly supported, which means we do not have state or government grants to run our programs. We simply rely on the public to be involved and help make their islands better for all. Their volunteers work year round on both the Big Island and Oahu to assure the needs of poverty stricken keiki are met. Not only during the holidays, but

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Teen Mentor and his camp buddies at Summer Camp 2007. Best Buds for LIFE. Kate was the teen mentor, and Cat was the camp buddy

Kevin Patrick

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year round services are provided to help keep the keiki healthy, and educated. For more details about Christmas Wish Program, Inc., please visit the website at [www.ChristmasWishProgram.org](http://www.ChristmasWishProgram.org). Volunteers for the summer camp, and donors can also contact the office for more details. Company sponsorships are welcome, and logos can be placed on camp t-shirts.

All donations and 80% of tuition fees are tax-deductible.


Teens wishing to sign up for this wonderful life changing experience can contact our offices between May 1-30. Application deadline is June 15th. Applications can be found on the website <http://www.culturalinstituteofamerica.com/miniproject.html>

For more details or information, please contact our offices at (808) 982-8128, or (808) 987-6018.

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